

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5843

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 7722

DEPT PASS USIA

EO 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINR SOPN UR US

1. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION I HAD WITH IVAN UDALTSOV, THE NEWLY ARRIVED SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN GREECE AND FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE NOVOSTI PRESS AGENCY IN MOSCOW, WE HAD A VERY GENERAL DISCUSSION OF CURRENT SUBJECTS OF INTEREST IN GREECE - SUCH AS THE CYPRUS PROBLEM AND GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS. (BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON UDALTSOV AND HIS FAMILY BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.)

2. THE ONLY SUBJECT WE DISCUSSED WHERE I THINK HIS COMMENTS DESERVE RECORDING, HOWEVER, WAS ON VOICE OF AMERICA BROADCASTS TO THE USSR. UDALTSOV SAID TO ME AT ONE POINT THAT HE WAS QUITE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE BROADCASTS BECAUSE OF THE EFFECT HE THOUGHT THEY COULD HAVE ON US-USSR BILATERAL REALTIONS AND ON THE ATTITUDES OF SOVIET CITIZENS TOWARD THEIR OWN LEADERSHIP. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUESTION, HE SAID THAT THE VOA HAD BEEN CARRYING A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF "POLITICAL" MATERIAL CONCERNING THE PRIMARIES AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS IN THE US. FOR EXAMPLE, HE SAID, PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY LEADING AMERICAN CANDIDATES FOR POLITICAL OFFICE WERE BEING CARRIED ON

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THE BROADCASTS, AND MANY OF THESE STATEMENTS WERE VERY

CRITICAL OF THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATIONS POLICIES AND THE CONCEPT OF DETENTE BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. UDALTSOV SAID THAT AS I KNEW THE SOVIET POLITICAL SYSTEM WAS QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THE AMERICAN SYSTEM, AND THE PEOPLE OF THE SOVIET UNION FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPREHEND THE AMERICAN POLITICAL PROCESS. ACCORDINGLY, HE WAS AFRAID THAT MANY SOVIET CITIZENS GAVE UNWARRANTED IMPORTANCE TO STATEMENTS BY AMERICAN CAMPAIGNERS AND SEEKERS OF POLITICAL OFFICE AND THIS LED TO APPREHENSIONS ABOUT THE OVERALL VALIDITY OF PRESENT RELATIONSHIPS AND POLICIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. SUCH BROADCASTS ALSO RAISED IN THE MINDS OF SOVIET LISTENERS QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR OWN LEADERSHIP AND WHETHER OR NOT PRESENT SOVIET LEADERS WERE FOLLOWING POLICIES THAT WERE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY. UDALTSOV PRESENTED THIS LINE OF THINKING ALONG WITH THE OBSERVATION THAT SUCH REACTIONS AMONG SOVIET CITIZENS COULD NOT BE IN THE INTERESTS OF THE US.

3. I DID NOT ACCEPT UDALTSOV'S LINE OF ARGUMENT AND MADE THE NATURAL POINTS ABOUT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN OUR TWO SYSTEMS AND THE OPENNESS OF OUR DEMOCRATIC ELECTION PROCESS. HOWEVER, I THOUGHT I SHOULD REPORT THIS CONVERSATION FOR WHATEVER VALUE IT MAY HAVE TO THE DEPARTMENT AND USIA. EMBASSY/MOSCOW MAY HAVE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS TO MAKE.
KUBISCH

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